Reports of regional intergovernmental bodies :

— Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian Offshore Areas.

— Interim Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin.

— Typhoon Committee.

— Asian and Pacific Development Centre.

Piogramme Planning :

— Programme budget for the bien-nium 1994-1995, as adopted by the General Assembly, and proposed programme changes.

— Second revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

— Issues relevant to and resources for the technical cooperation activities of ESCAP.

Announcement of intended contributions :

— Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions Activities of the Advisory Committee or Per manent Representatives and other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

Date, venue and any other subject pertaining to the fifty-first session of the Commission.

Impact of Budget Incentives on Tobacco Fanners

4333. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of the likely impact of the recent incentives given in the Budget for tobacco farmers ;

(b) whether it is a fact that the excise concessions announced in the Budget will increase tobacco production ; and

(c) steps being taken to encourage tobacco farmers to utilise the incentives given in the Budget ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) The specific rates of duties on cigarettes have remained unchanged for two years despite an increase in price, and hence the duties have increased by about 12%. However, in the non-filter segment, the excise duty for upto 60 mm category has.been reduced from Rs. 120 per thousand to Rs. 60 per thousand for increased utilisation of tobacco in this industry, which would in tarn help the tobacco growers. The continuation of export incentives for cigarettes and tobacco would also benefit the tobacco farmers.

Organisations for Monitoring Tobacco Cultivation

4334. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the Organisations under Commerce Ministry which are responsible for super-vising, monitoring and encouraging tobacco cultivation ; and

(b) what steps are proposed to be taken to make tobacco a leading farm export ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The Tobacco Board is the only Organisation under the Ministry of Commerce concerned with FCV tobacco cultivation.

(b) The following steps are being taken to increase exports of Indian Tobacco :—

~ sending trade delegations to various select markets.

— participation in International Ex-hibitions.

— Persuading Govt's of importing countries through joint committee meetings to import Indian Tobacco.

— Permitting export of tobacco to Russia through debt payment channel.

— Improving the quality and pro-ductivity levels of Indian Tobacco so as to make it more price competitive in international markets.

— Expanding the base of quality Tobacco in light soils by indentification of suitable soils.

— Regular monitoring and strict control of pesticide residues.

— improving grading at farm level.

Auction Platforms in Tribal Areas of Andhra Pradesh

4335. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Tobacco Board has put up auction platforms in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh ;

(b) if so, the number of such platforms catering largely to tribal areas; aud

(c) the quantity of tobacco purchased last year from such auction platforms ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b). Three in 1994 season.

(c) Platform.

Platform	Qty. Marketed ((Kgs.) in 1993
1. Bhadrachalam-I .	4,672,478
2. Bhadrachalam-II .	3,057,866
3. Koyyalagudem .	5,781,451
4. Jangareddy Gudem	7,712,794

Non-product Specific A.M.S. on Agriculture

4336. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) The Domestic Support in India on Non-Product Specific Aggregate Measurement Support in the list of commitments in agriculture as provided in GATT proposals on Diesel, lubricants, machinery and finance etc : and

(b) how much support component of non-product specific Aggregate Measurement Support on fertilizer, electricity, major, medium and minor irrigation, credit and seeds are attributed to 17 products specified in the list of Product Specific Aggregate Measurement Support ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The non-product specific Aggregate Measurements Support (AMS) has been calculated taking into account subsidies on fertilizers, credit, electricity, irrigation and supply of seeds during the base period 1986—89. The support being non-product specific in nature, it cannot be attributed to any product group. The details of calculations of AMS on these items arc provided in the Schedule of commitments to GATT, a copy of which is available in the Parliament Library.

No separate calculation has been made in respect of diesel, lubricants, machinery, finance etc.

Consignments Inspected by Export Inspection Council

4337. SHRI MATANG SINH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of consignments inspected by Export Inspection Council, in Delhi during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of them that were found lacking specifications prescribed by Government during this period;

(c) the action taken against the erring exporters/manufacturers;

(d) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to remove the compulsory pre-shipment' inspection and if so. the reasons therefor; and

a) what other steps Government proposed to take to ensure quality control of export goods in accordance with international standards ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) and (b) The Export Inspection Council (EIC) does not carry out any inspection of export consignments, 5 Export Inspection Agencies (EIAs) under the administrative